

AXBRIDGE RURAL
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Annual Reports

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Chief Sanitary Inspector
for 1938



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1938

TOTAL BIRTHS—294. 160 Males. 134 Females.

				Total.		Males.		Females.
Legitimate	286	...	156	...	130
Illegitimate	...	...	...	8	...	4	...	4
				<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>
				294	...	160	...	134
				<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>

Rate per 1,000—13·37.

DEATHS (ALL CAUSES)—276.

Males, 153. Females, 123. Rate per 1,000—12·55.

Number of women dying in or from child-birth—

From Sepsis 0

Other accidents and diseases of pregnancy and parturition 1

Death-rate of infantile deaths under 1 year per 1,000 births— —

Total—17 infantile deaths.

Deaths from Measles (all ages) ... 0

Whooping Cough 1

Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ... 0

The prevalence of Cancer is marked, 45 (males 22, females 23).

Deaths from Tuberculosis, 8 (males 4, females 4).

DEATHS UNDER ONE YEAR, 1938.

Under 1 week 6

1—4 weeks 3

1—6 months 6

6—12 months 2

Total ... 17

Illegitimate—1 male.

Stillbirths, 9 (males 5, females 4).

Legitimate (males 5, females 4).

AXBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH for 1938.

Dr. LÈCHE, Axbridge

To the Chairman and Members of the Axbridge Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—

The geographical features of the district are chiefly limestone, sandstone in a few localities, peat in the lower marshes, and clay. The water in the lowlands near the sea being brackish, where shallow wells are dug as in the North Marsh.

The area is 89,767 acres.

Estimated total Population for 1938, 25,360 (excluding

R.A.F. Trainees, approximate number 4,000).

Census, 1931, 21,905.

Population in private families, 22,150.

Estimated number of private families, 6,042.

Rooms per person, 1.1.

Rateable value, £140,416.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £585 1s. 4d.

WATER SUPPLY.

The South Marsh supply, owned by the Rural District Council, arises from springs in a well at Cross, through the limestone strata. The springs are fenced in. The springs at Dunnett, Compton Bishop, augment the well of the South Marsh scheme. South Marsh.

Cheddar,
Axbridge and
Highbridge.

The Cheddar, Axbridge, Wedmore and Highbridge Water supply, owned by the Rural District Council, arises from the springs on Charterhouse in an isolated spot and believed free from any source of contamination.

The water flows by gravitation to a reservoir in the cliff of 80,000 gallons capacity, and thence by pipes to a reservoir at Brent Knoll of 180,000 gallons capacity, for the supply of the Urban District of Highbridge.

Winscombe.

The Winscombe and Shipham Water supply, owned by the Rural District Council of Axbridge, arises from springs at Rowberrow Bottom, from the sandstone formation.

The Charterhouse Springs and the Bristol Water Works now supplement this supply, and during 1938 considerable augmentation was necessary.

The composition of the water is good, and is not hard.

Blagdon.

Name, owners
and nature.

The Blagdon Water supply, owned by the Rural District Council of Axbridge, arises from springs at Blagdon, known as the Ellick Springs, from the old red sandstone. They are now well protected and not liable to any contamination, all access by cattle being prevented.

North Marsh.

The North Marsh Scheme, owned by the Rural District Council of Axbridge, supplies the following parishes :— Banwell, Churchill, Congresbury, Puxton, Locking, Wick St. Lawrence, Wrington and Butcombe. The water for this area is obtained from three sources—viz., the Rowberrow Reservoir of the Bristol Waterworks Company, the Blackdown Reservoir of the Winscombe and Shipham supply, and the Charterhouse springs.

Burrington.

The Burrington Water supply was taken over from the Burrington Parochial Water Committee on the 1st April, 1937.

Cheddar and
Axbridge.

The Bristol Waterworks Company have made a lake approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference in the low land between Axbridge and Cheddar to serve as a reservoir.

Loxton, population 161, is now supplied from public mains laid by the Axbridge Council. Loxton.

With few exceptions, the water supplies have no plumbo or solvent action, and cases of lead poisoning are not now known. More care is taken with the taps, storage and manufacture of cider, brass, pewter and galvanised vessels being abandoned.

Examinations of water are usually bacteriological. Water
Analyses.

Sewers exist in Wrington, Cheddar, Axbridge, Banwell and Blagdon. There are still privies and cesspits in use in other parishes. These are gradually being replaced by w.c's, which are made to discharge to cesspools at least 50 feet from dwellings. No privy or cesspit or manure heap should empty or overflow direct into a ditch, and in view of the actions at law recently taken owing to cattle being poisoned by polluted ditches, the matter is of grave importance. Sewers and
Drainage.

Much drainage and sewerage work has been carried out in the District, and the sanitation of many parishes compares favourably with that of many towns. Drainage.

Privies are rapidly being replaced with water carriage systems and with earth closets. In places with a water supply, water-flushed w.c's are in general use.

The Winscombe sewer was nearly completed.

Owing to various complaints, the County Medical Officer arranged meetings of the County Sanitary Inspector and the Axbridge Rural District Council to inspect the insanitary condition of the 36 houses and premises situated in the New Road, Cheddar. All these houses stand in only an eighth ($\frac{1}{8}$) acre of ground, each having a cesspit with "soak-aways." These small gardens are *sewage soaked* and the lower ones especially are flooded with sewage in wet weather. The County Medical Officer considered it to be an insanitary area and that a sewer was necessary. This was also agreed to in "the Five Years' Plan" adopted by the Rural District Council. The Cheddar Parish Council, however declined to construct a sewer here. They have laid a Cheddar Sewer

6-inch pipe to drain the land adjacent to the lowest part of the road, which is no substitute for a sewer.

Swarms of flies and rats are complained of ; the sewer is welcomed, except for the cost of connecting up.

With its enormous reservoir and big summer population, the drainage of Cheddar should be above reproach.

The County Medical Officer declines further responsibility.

Scavenging.

Orders investing the District Council with Urban Powers for removal of household refuse have been adopted in respect of the parishes of Cheddar, Axbridge, Hutton, Berrow, Congresbury, Kewstoke, Wedmore and Winscombe. Otherwise, house refuse is removed by the individual householder, and the cesspits emptied periodically in like manner. It is desirable that village dumps containing sundry old tins and other refuse be periodically removed.

Milk Supply.

Dairy work is the chief industry of the district. The procedures are usually carried out with increasing care. The churns are either scalded out with boiling water or steamed, and the milk is usually excellent in quality. The milk that is sent away to towns is all strained and cooled by special water-cooled apparatus. Milk cans must not be left in the fields and washed in ditch water, as has been known to occur.

The farms and cowsheds are constantly and thoroughly inspected, and much help given, and great improvements have been effected. The Sanitary Inspector and his assistants have been most tactful and successful.

The cows and cowsheds are kept fairly clean, though hardly up to the Continental or model standard, and "the cow is a dirty animal." Grooming the cows and sheds means labour—the grave present-day difficulty in most callings of agriculture—still the question of cleanliness cannot too strongly be impressed on those who attend to cowsheds and dairies, and upon milkers especially. The health of the animals in the locality is usually good ; being a very mild area they are out most of the winter months, and tuberculosis is apparently not so common as in some districts.

In case of infectious disease in a dairy farm the milk is all sent off from the field of milking, and is not allowed to enter the premises ; dairy work is temporarily stopped and the milk sold forthwith. By these stringent measures disease is very materially stopped from spreading, and our thanks are due to the farmers who always acquiesce in this procedure without hesitation, notwithstanding the loss and the inconvenience it causes.

Thirty-seven Grade " A " (T.T.) are licensed by the Somerset County Council.

Forty-five Grade " A " Accredited Milk licences have been issued by the Somerset County Council.

Thirty-five herd samples of milk for testing for the presence of tubercle bacilli, 95 Grade " A " (T.T.), 159 Grade " A " Accredited and 1 Pasteurised Milk samples were taken during the year and 50 unsatisfactory results were recorded.

The Register of Dairies is complete.

The pig industry is increasing and is satisfactorily ^{Pigs.} carried out in a cleanly and efficient manner. The few complaints which arose were speedily dealt with.

Advice is constantly given and suggestions made, and the conditions are improving as regards method, buildings and sanitation, though there is much room for improvement and progress. Manure is not removed frequently enough.

The sanitary inspections have been numerous, many ^{Sanitary Inspections.} household defects were remedied—*e.g.*, sinks, w.c's, rubbish heaps, ventilation defects, dirty rooms, bedding, furniture and bad floors. No cellar dwellings exist in the district.

No complaints have been made about bugs. ^{Bugs.}

During 1938, 2,354lbs. of meat and a quantity of ^{Food.} offals have been surrendered or seized. More than 50 per cent. was affected by tuberculosis.

The sanitary condition of some of the schools is not ^{Schools.} good, and this matter is receiving special attention. The

water supply and conveniences for washing are in most cases adequate. All cases of absence from infectious disease are reported by the schoolmaster or mistress to the Medical Officer of Health and the County Medical Officer, and the cases excluded from school.

Many cases of adenoid disease, bad teeth, defective eyesight and hearing have been attended to.

Housing Act.

It is very essential that the existing houses be made waterproof and habitable. Houses are so scarce that few can be allowed to be abandoned, and some absolutely essential repairs should be carried out temporarily, in view of being demolished or reconstructed later ; others in better condition should be put in good repair, as every house so restored means saving the erection of new houses costing £350 each.

Care will naturally be taken that such be for the working class only, and not for town people who like to have a little cottage in the country for week-end visits.

It is also questionable if houses in the marshes and turf moors are fit for habitation. They are dry and comfortable in the summer, but are periodically flooded in the winter and in times of heavy rainfall.

Factory and Workshops Act.

All industries are on a small scale, employing a few hands only.

No register is provided, but the bakehouses (19), butchers and sausage makers ; dressmakers ; basket and boot makers ; tailors ; saddlers ; washing people ; carpenters and coach builders ; smiths and brewers are constantly inspected on our daily rounds of inspection and visits.

All workshops in the district have been periodically inspected ; also the home workers. No cases of infectious disease have originated therefrom.

Baths.

There is 1 Public Swimming Pool at Cheddar ; a small one is used at the Summer Camp, Barton. Both are well cared for.

Nursing and Midwives.

The 11 district Nurses and Midwives do excellent work.

Professional Nursing in the Home.—(a) The County allow a subsidy. The proceeds of entertainments, maternity fees, and subscriptions from patients are the chief sources of revenue. The latter, in some districts, are not easy to collect, though the nurses are invaluable and deeply appreciated and worked very hard.

(b) There are no nurses provided for Infectious Diseases—*e.g.*, measles, etc. If necessary, as in an epidemic, they must be engaged from a centre and lodged near the cases.

District Nurses are also Certified Midwives. There are eleven in the Axbridge District.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.—Those at Weston-super-Mare are utilised for this district for venereal and tubercular diseases.

There are no Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, Day Nurseries, School Clinics, etc., in this district.

Hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or the County Council.—There are the Isolation Hospital at Cross, the Axbridge Public Assistance Infirmary of 60 beds, and the St. Michael's Home for Phthisis near Axbridge.

There is no Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children in the district, except the two excellent maternity wards at the Axbridge Infirmary and the Children's Home, Cheddar.

The work is done by the Medical Officer of Health, the Sanitary Inspectors and the Lady Health Visitors, who have had much experience of tuberculosis and general sanitary work, all acting under the control of the County Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary
Administration.

All throat swabs of suspicious diphtheritic aspect, sputa from possible and probable tuberculosis cases and blood specimens, water analysis, chemical and bacteriological, are sent to the experts at the Public Health Laboratory, Taunton, whose decisions have been most accurate and of the utmost value and assistance.

Scarlatina.

Has been prevalent ; 23 cases were reported ; these were mostly of a sporadic type—imported cases. No deaths occurred. In all cases any milk business was confined to sending off milk from the field of milking and no dairy work was conducted on the premises. The houses were visited, precautions were enjoined, and pamphlets of advice given, and the schools notified.

On the termination of the disease the rooms were thoroughly disinfected, all linen washed and boiled, while the bedding, blankets and pillows were placed in the super-heated steam disinfector, being moved now **immediately** by the Council's own van.

Measles.

Has been prevalent.

Para-typhoid.

No cases of para-typhoid.

Typhoid.

No cases of typhoid.

Venereal Diseases.

None notified ; these can be treated locally with the aid of the County Laboratory.

Diphtheria.

There have been 7 cases notified during the year, mostly of a severe type ; one died. Cultures of all suspected throats have been taken and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory, to whom our best thanks are due for the rapidity and accuracy of their investigation, without which in obscure and mild cases a correct diagnosis could scarcely be arrived at.

Antitoxin has been distributed free of charge, *ad lib*, to all the Poor Law Medical Officers, which bounty has been much appreciated, and it has been used freely and promptly with much success.

At the termination of cases, disinfection is carried out, as in cases of scarlatina.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

No cases notified.

Schools.

Measles, etc.

The following schools were closed for infectious diseases :—Hewish, Butcombe, Compton Bishop and Biddisham for influenza ; Loxton and Weare for chicken-pox ; Hewish for mumps ; Weare, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, Biddisham and Badgworth for whooping-cough ; Butcombe, Charterhouse, Bleadon and Winscombe for measles ; Wedmore for scarlet fever.

Preventive measures are adopted in scarlatina and diphtheria, regarding the discharges from the mouth and nose as a possible means of spreading the malady.

These are disinfected or burnt, particular care being enjoined as to the nasal and oral secretions, mouth toys, pencils, etc., and orders given to boil cups, spoons and feeding utensils after use, and rag or paper handkerchiefs carefully burnt. Kissing spreads disease to a dangerous extent. The same applies to sleeping sickness, spinal fever, measles, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

No cases.

Puerperal
Fever.

Three cases ; no deaths.

Puerperal
Pyrexia.

Vaccination.

Eleven successful cases **under 1 year** and **2 over 1 year**, four being at the Union Workhouse.

Nineteen cases were notified and 8 deaths. The excellent way in which all cases of tuberculosis are inspected, followed up and advised, and the suitable cases sent to Homes and Sanatoria, must reduce the disease in time, although there was a marked increase in 1938 in notifications. No actions have been taken *re* Public Health Regulations (Tuberculosis), 1925, or compulsory measures necessary.

Tuberculosis.

All the rooms were sprayed with Izal and fumigated after evacuation. The cases are constantly inspected and advised. Milk should always be boiled or sterilised.

There is a Hospital of 40 beds at Cross Hill, Axbridge. It has again done good service in outbreaks of diphtheria and scarlatina. A special report is appended.

Isolation
Hospital.

There is an ambulance for the Fever Hospital and an excellent new one at Cheddar run by a private concern.

Ambulances.

Accidents are ambulated by private enterprise, supported by voluntary contributions, and fees when obtainable ; it is well conducted. Cheddar, Axbridge, Shipham, Stoke and Draycott are served by this ambulance of the Cheddar Branch of St. John Ambulance Brigade. A new two-stretcher, 26 h.p. Bedford car was obtained in 1938.

Infectious Diseases.—The whole of the District is served by the ambulance of the Joint Isolation Hospital Committee (Bridgwater Borough, Urban and Rural, and Axbridge Rural Councils), a Morris two-stretcher, with locker for removal of bedding, etc. When this ambulance is not available, arrangements can be made with the adjoining authorities of Weston-super-Mare and Wells.

Disinfection.

All articles for disinfection are sent to the steam disinfector at the Isolation Hospital for all infectious cases—scarlatina, diphtheria and tuberculosis. In tuberculosis, the rooms occupied are sprayed with Izal, the rooms papered or coloured, whenever possible, and ceilings whitewashed.

Notifications of tuberculosis are reported to the Health Department in Taunton and the place visited by the Health Visitors, Inspector or myself. Leaflets of advice are distributed and disinfectants and sputum bottles provided, or other articles requisite for personal sanitation. The removal van, for removal of infected bedding, is invaluable.

**Acts.
Byelaws.**

The Public Health Acts Amendment Act and the Infectious Disease Prevention Act, 1890, have been adopted in this district. Byelaws and Regulations have been made for slaughter-houses, nuisances and buildings.

Births.

See Tables, page 2.

Deaths.

See Tables for deaths under one year.

MILK SUPPLY.

(a) Number of Retailers on the Register	112
(b) Number of Cowkeepers and Wholesalers on the Register	790
(c) An inspection (farm to farm) of the whole district is being made.	
(d) General advice and cleanliness emphasised everywhere.	
(e) Tuberculin Tested Milk Licences	37
(f) Accredited Milk Licences	45

NOTIFIED INFECTIOUS DISEASES, 1938.

				Admitted to			
				Total.	Hospital.	Deaths.	
Scarlatina	...	...	...	23	18	...	0
Diphtheria	...	...	...	7	4	...	1
Enteric and Para-typhoid			...	0	0	...	0
Puerperal Pyrexia		...	...	3	0	...	0
Pneumonia	...	...	...	18	0	...	11
Measles	...	...	...	78	3	...	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	...		...	0	0	...	0
Erysipelas	...	...	...	7	2	...	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum			...	0	0	...	0
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis			...	0	0	...	0
Malaria	...	...	...	0	0	...	0
Dysentery	...	...	...	1	1	...	0
Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	1	0	...	0

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases, 1938						Deaths, 1938.					
Age period.	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Total.	Age period.	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Total.
	M.	F.	M.	F.			M.	F.	M.	F.	
0	0	0	0	0—	0	0	0	0	0	0—	0
1	0	1	0	0—	1	1	0	0	1	0—	1
5	0	1	2	2—	5	5	0	0	0	0—	0
15	0	1	0	0—	1	15	0	1	0	1—	2
25	0	3	1	0—	4	25	2	0	0	0—	2
35	1	1	0	0—	2	35	0	1	0	0—	1
45	2	0	0	1—	3	45	1	0	0	0—	1
55	1	1	0	0—	2	55	0	1	0	0—	1
65 up	0	0	0	1—	1	65 up	0	0	0	0—	0
	—	—	—	—	—		—	—	—	—	—
	4	8	3	4	19		3	3	1	1—	8
	—	—	—	—	—		—	—	—	—	—

CAUSES OF DEATH IN AXBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT, 1938.

					Males.	Females.
All causes	...	...	...	...	153	123
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	0	0
Small-pox	...	...	...	...	0	0
Measles	...	...	...	...	0	0
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	0	0
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	1	0
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	1	0
Influenza	...	...	...	...	5	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	...	...	0	0
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	...	...	...	...	3	3
Other tuberculous diseases	...	...	...	...	1	1
Cancer, malignant disease	...	...	...	...	22	23
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	3	2
Cerebral hæmorrhage, etc.	...	...	...	...	4	8
Heart disease	...	...	...	...	46	38
Aneurysm	...	...	...	...	0	0
Other circulatory diseases	...	...	...	...	9	3
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	4	3
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	7	4
Other respiratory diseases	...	...	...	...	0	1
Peptic ulcer	...	...	...	...	1	1
Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years)	...	...	...	...	0	0
Appendicitis and typhilitis	...	...	...	...	0	1
Cirrhosis of liver	...	...	...	...	2	0
Other liver diseases	...	...	...	...	2	0
Other digestive diseases	...	...	...	...	2	1
Acute and chronic nephritis	...	...	...	...	4	3
Puerperal sepsis	...	...	...	...	0	0
Other puerperal causes	...	...	...	...	0	1
Congenital debility and malformation, premature birth	...	...	...	...	7	2
Senility	...	...	...	...	6	14
Suicide	...	...	...	...	5	0
Other deaths from violence	...	...	...	...	4	1
Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	14	13
Causes ill-defined	...	...	...	...	0	0

Notification is carefully carried out.

Numerous inspections have been made in the district and all insanitary conditions and nuisances abated as soon as they were discovered or reported, while those localities in which diseases appeared received special attention and its sanitation investigated and improved.

I am, your obedient servant,

A. V. LÈCHE,

Medical Officer of Health.

Factories, Workshops, Workplaces and Homework.**1—INSPECTION.**

Including Inspections made by the Sanitary Inspectors.

Premises.	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices	Prosecutions
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	5	1	Nil
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	2	Nil	Nil
Workplaces	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	7	1	Nil

2—DEFECTS FOUND IN ABOVE.

Two nuisances under the Public Health Acts were dealt with in connection with the above—*i.e.*, want of cleanliness (S.1), one ; and sanitary conveniences (S.7), insufficient, one. Both were remedied.

A. V. LÈCHE, Axbridge,

April, 1939.

Medical Officer of Health.

Phthisis Sanatorium and Hospital Accommodation.

AXBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT.

	ST. MICHAEL'S HOME.
Classes for which accommodation is provided—	
(a) Early cases	—
(b) Intermediate cases	25
(c) Advanced cases	16
By whom provided	Endowed by the late Mrs. W. Gibbs.
Where situated	Axbridge.
Total number of beds	41
How are patients selected?	By application.
Are the patients under the care of a resident Medical Officer	No.
What charge, if any, is made for the use of Beds?	None.
Do the Sanitary Authority use : (1) their Isolation Hospital, or (2) their Small-pox Hospital for cases of Phthisis?	No.
Do the Sanitary Authority reserve Beds in any Phthisis Sanatorium? If so, how many, and in what Sanatorium? ...	No.
Do the Sanitary Authority provide portable Open-air Shelters or Tents? ...	Yes.

There is a Tuberculosis Dispensary at Weston-super-Mare and Cheddar.

A. V. LÈCHE,
Medical Officer of Health.

INFECTIOUS HOSPITAL, CROSS.

The following cases were admitted during 1938—in all 125 :—Scarlet fever, 35 cases, with no deaths ; diphtheria, 25 cases, with no deaths. Many of the above were severe, with adenitis and ear complications, but all were discharged cured and in good health. Serum was given in all cases of diphtheria and in many of the graver cases of scarlet fever, with good results. Typhoid, 42 cases ; para-typhoid, 1 ; dysentery, 1, a severe Flexner type, on which a full report is annexed ; 1 doubtful typhoid, that proved to be T.B. ; measles 5 ; mumps, 1 ; erysipelas, 3 ; chicken-pox, 1 ; opthalmic neonatorum, 1, discharged cured ; a rectal abscess (one of the staff) ; 1 doubtful dysentery that proved to be sprue ; also 7 suspicious “ throats,” 2 being from the Military Camp, Locking ; they proved to be only “ inflammatory ” cases.

TYPHOID OUTBREAK. REPORT OF CASES RECEIVED IN FEVER HOSPITAL, CROSS.

Between January and May, 1938, we had an influx of 43 cases of typhoid of which 1 was a para-typhoid, 2 were carriers, and 1 an abortive typhoid. One case was admitted which proved to be dysentery of the severe Flexner type. There were six deaths. Of the total cases, 23 were males, 21 were females, 6 were children under 10 years.

All the cases were severe, many having hæmorrhage from the nose and from the bowel. Constipation was an outstanding symptom. Several of the grave cases were greatly benefited by subcutaneous and intravenous transfusions of normal saline and glucose. Relapses were common and severe, in which case no milk or food was given for two or three days but only fluids, fruit juice and glucose. No special drugs seemed to show any remarkable benefit. Sulphonilamide was useful in pyelitis, cystitis, colitis and meningitis, but except in these complications it did not seem to have any marked influence on the disease itself.

Serum was disappointing and though my experience was very limited and unconvincing, it seemed to upset the immunity balance of the patients. It was given in four of the fatal cases and in six with severe hæmorrhage of the bowel and the nose. Doubtless it was a coincidence and in no way due to the serum. We admitted two carriers who could give no history of any illness, and one abortive case, a man only slightly ill for ten days but with a plus Widal and positive urine and fæces. He soon recovered. One case, a frail woman of 53, sank under a relapse after making good initial progress for five weeks. She had an axillary abscess which refused to heal after being freely opened. Saline and glucose transfusions, both subcutaneous and intravenous, helped for a while, but she died from weakness.

Transfusions of glucose and saline had a most beneficial effect on children who showed marked and rapid dehydration.

A case of Flexner's dysentery, with severe diarrhœa and sickness, resisted all the usual remedies by mouth and bowel lavage. She caused great anxiety as she seemed to be dying of exhaustion. A pill of quarter grain of copper and quarter grain opium, a favourite remedy for dysentery many years ago, had a dramatic effect and she was discharged cured in two weeks.

One case of typhoid still remains with us as a carrier. She was dangerously ill for two months but has recovered physically. She is 18 stone and 62 years of age but is able to walk several times a day in the grounds and feels extremely well. Her urine and fæces are still positive in spite of expert advice and our best efforts to rid her of the bacillus typhosius. Removal of her gall bladder is regarded as being too dangerous in her case.

The success of keeping the epidemic from spreading to the neighbouring watering place of Burnham-on-Sea was remarkable, and due to the skill and untiring efforts of Dr. Davidson, the County Medical Officer, and his staff, *and the adjacent medical officers of health*. Every suspected house, shop and factory was "combed," swabbed and "Widaled." The butter, cheese and other food all had to face the microscope, but the result, was worth it.

My best thanks are also due to Dr. Peters, the eminent specialist of the Bristol Fever Hospital. His weekly visits were most enjoyable and instructive. Dr. Cooper surgeon to the Weston-super-Mare Hospital, often gave his skill and assistance, so also Dr. Scott of Axbridge, whose help was invaluable.

The untiring devotion and courage with which the Matron, nursing staff and laundry worked night and day before we could get extra skilled nurses was beyond all praise.

A. V. LËCHE,
Medical Officer of Health.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.

In October, 1938, carrying out the orders of the County Medical Officer, I arranged seven " Posts " and 19 first aid stations, schools and village halls being selected, the kind and ever - willing help and control by the local doctors being enlisted, with the invaluable aid of a lady leader and two V.A.Ds. or similarly skilled ladies. The sites were inspected and the doctors consulted. The equipment from headquarters alone is wanting, to find these sections ready when called upon.

The most important units are Blagdon and Cheddar, with their large reservoir lakes. The staffs at both stations are very efficient. The orders of the County Medical Officer to clear the Fever Hospital and equip for 60 emergency beds was carried out in 12 hours. Also, provisions, medical and other stores, of a non-perishable nature, were completed in 48 hours, thanks to " The Stores " in Axbridge.

A skilful surgeon, Dr. Cooper, on the staff of the Weston Hospital, though living only a mile distant, was engaged. Dr. Scott of Axbridge, an experienced anæsthetist, was asked to stand by.

A. V. LÈCHE,

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR 1938.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Axbridge Rural
District Council.*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my 23rd Annual Report dealing with the work carried out by your Public Health Department during the year 1938.

The progressive policy of the Council and the effect of recent legislation combined to place increasing duties upon the Council's officers.

Schedules are attached which indicate the work in ^{Housing} connection with Housing in the District.

Progress was made with the Housing Survey but the work was considerably delayed owing to new duties in connection with other Public Health matters. The difficulty in dealing with owner-occupiers of limited means continues but the public outlook has changed and there is far more support in remedying conditions than was previously the case. Practically the whole of the unfit cottages have been dealt with under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936. There now remains a large volume of work to be carried out in the repair and re-conditioning of cottages which can be made fit at a reasonable cost under the powers of Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936.

Council Houses. During the year 24 houses were surveyed under the 1936 Housing Act and the necessary repairs carried out. The paths to 12 sites were re-laid ; 1,797 general maintenance repairs were carried out ; 24 houses were decorated internally upon change of tenancy ; 118 houses were painted externally ; water services were connected to the 1924 housing site at Sand, Wedmore (four houses).

Overcrowding. The Survey carried out to ascertain the extent of over-crowding in working-class dwellings and subsequent inspections showed that over-crowding was not prevalent in the Axbridge District to anything like the extent in most other Districts. Steps were taken to provide for dealing with such cases as existed.

The details of over-crowded dwellings, etc., are given in a Schedule embodied in this Report.

**Moveable
Dwellings.**

The coming into operation of Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936, and the licensing of lands and classes of moveable dwellings gave some form of control to camping, etc.

Where camping is extensive any close or proper control may be reasonably satisfactorily applied as regards lands, but may prove a very onerous duty as regards individual licences of dwellings.

The Rural Districts appear to be increasingly called upon to extend or provide staffs and public services to protect their Districts against undesirable and sporadic developments from the towns.

The Council has made a practice of encouraging genuine tourists and holiday camping but the trend of recent legislation appears to be to permit utilisation of various forms of bus and tram bodies, sheds and shacks, at least for limited periods and for letting, leaving it to the Local Authorities concerned to devise means of inspection and supervision and to alleviate as best they may the detraction from local amenities and damage to proper development arising out of the general permission given by the Act.

There was a continuance of the policy of dealing with ^{Letters and Notices.} matters whenever reasonably possible by interview rather than by letter or Statutory Notice.

Formal procedures are frequently mistrusted and resented by the public, and their elimination usually results in a more comprehensive solution of any difficulty.

The number of informal letters sent by the Department was 5,257.

Water supplies from the Council's mains were provided ^{Water Services.} to 236 premises in continuance of the Council's offer to lay services to boundaries of highways free of cost.

SCHEME.					CONNECTIONS.
North Marsh	...	...	...	...	78
Wedmore	...	...	...	...	30
South Marsh	...	...	...	...	12
Blagdon	...	...	...	...	5
Winscombe and Shipham	...	...	...	...	15
Cheddar and Axbridge	...	...	...	...	18
Berrow and Brean	...	...	...	...	5
Brent Knoll	...	...	...	...	3
Burrington	...	...	...	...	11

PART III. CO-ORDINATION SCHEME.

Bleadon	...	...	...	...	20
Compton Bishop	...	...	...	...	5
Loxton	...	...	...	...	18
Hutton	...	...	...	...	16

Sixteen samples of water from private supplies were submitted to the Laboratory of the Health Department of the Somerset County Council for bacteriological examination.

Periodical bacteriological samples of the public supplies were also submitted. Analytical samples were submitted to Messrs. Waterfall & O'Brien.

Disinfection was carried out to 90 rooms, etc., after ^{Disinfections.} cases of infectious disease.

The methods of disinfection were by means of Izal spray, formalin solution and formaldehyde fumigators. All infected articles or articles exposed to infection which could not be satisfactorily dealt with in the homes, such as clothing, bedding, rugs, cushions, etc., were either removed for steam disinfection or were destroyed, as circumstances rendered expedient.

All steam disinfection was carried out at the disinfection station at the Isolation Hospital, in the Parish of Compton Bishop, and no infected article was outside the direct charge of a member of my staff or a member of the staff of the Isolation Hospital.

Drainage,
Sewerage and
Sewage
Disposal.

The excellent standard of construction of new drainage in the District was maintained.

With the extension of Water Schemes, difficulty was experienced in the older towns and villages as regards drainage disposal, owing to the absence of sewerage schemes and the impracticability of providing satisfactory cesspools on the very restricted plots forming the sites of the dwelling-houses. The operation of the Housing Acts, to some extent, assisted the solution of this problem, as many of the dwellings were found to be such as could only properly be dealt with by Demolition Orders.

In the Parishes of Cheddar, Banwell, Blagdon and Wrington there are comprehensive sewerage schemes, all excepting the latter being of recent construction.

A Scheme (£21,000) of sewerage and sewage disposal for the Parish of Winscombe was in hand and was partially available for drainage connections.

The sewerage scheme for Axbridge remained deferred pending decisions as to a new by-pass road.

The Wrington Sewage Disposal Works became obsolete and considerable reconstruction works are necessary. A preliminary survey was carried out for the preparation of a scheme for the reconstruction of these works.

The Axbridge Council, as the following schedule shows, has been very progressive in the matter of providing public water supplies. This progressive action resulted in larger usage of water and unfortunately in greater use of water courses, ditches, etc., for the disposal of filthy waters. In general, there are more nuisances from the disposal of filthy waters arising in the district than from other sources. Undoubtedly, the provision of public water supplies is hastening the need of comprehensive schemes in certain areas.

It is difficult to discriminate as to the effect of the development in any one parish, because over practically the whole of the Axbridge District building is proceeding and there is every likelihood of its continuing and increasing.

EXTENT TO WHICH DISTRICT WAS PROVIDED WITH PUBLIC SERVICES AT END OF YEAR 1938.

CONTRIBUTORY PLACE.					PIPED WATER SEWERS. SUPPLY. YARDS.	
Axbridge	...	...	...	...	1,686	3,686
Badgworth	...	...	...	...	Nil.	13,921
Banwell	...	...	...	...	6,300	29,649
Berrow	...	...	...	...	Nil.	3,550
Blagdon	...	...	...	...	8,406	17,112
Bleadon	...	...	...	...	Nil.	7,075
Brean	...	...	...	...	Nil.	5,280
Brent Knoll	...	...	...	...	Nil.	16,395
Burnham Without	...	...	...	...	Nil.	8,866
Burrington	...	...	...	...	Nil.	3,460
Butcombe	...	...	...	...	733	2,190
Chapel Allerton	...	...	...	...	Nil.	4,609
Cheddar	...	...	...	...	11,238	35,810
Churchill	...	...	...	...	Nil.	12,736
Compton Bishop	...	...	...	...	Nil.	6,983
Congresbury	...	...	...	...	400	15,376
East Brent	...	...	...	...	Nil.	22,677

Hutton	...	...	...	...	Nil.	4,780
Locking	...	...	...	...	Nil.	4,357
Loxton	...	...	...	...	Nil.	3,827
*Kewstoke	...	...	...	...	Nil.	5,224
Lymphsham	...	...	...	...	Nil.	11,263
Mark ...	...	...	...	...	Nil.	27,768
Puxton	...	...	...	...	Nil.	5,747
Shipham	...	...	...	...	Nil.	17,094
Weare	...	...	...	...	Nil.	12,116
Wedmore	...	...	...	...	733	40,379
Wick St. Lawrence	...	...	...	...	Nil.	5,169
Winscombe	...	...	...	...	8,202	25,430
Wrington	...	...	...	...	3,338	20,126

* Piped water undertaking owned by the Weston-super-Mare Borough Council.

Bakehouses.

The 19 bakehouses in the District were found to be well kept.

Slaughter-houses and Meat Inspection.

The number of private slaughter-houses on the register was 20. The manner in which they were kept was generally satisfactory, but owing to the large number efficient control was difficult to exercise. An increased number of visits to slaughter-houses during the period under review revealed that the provisions of Article 8 of the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, with regard to notified hours of slaughter were not being complied with as they should have been. Many visits were made during notified hours when no slaughtering was actually taking place. Steps were initiated for regularising this matter.

During the year 2,354lbs. of meat were seized or surrendered as being diseased, unsound or unfit for the food of man. More than 50 per cent. of the diseased meat was condemned as being affected by tuberculosis.

Instances were found of sheep being slaughtered without previous stunning by a mechanically-operated instrument, in contravention of the Slaughter of Animals Act.

In no case was it considered desirable to prosecute for meat or other food offences.

Milk production is the principal industry of the District. There were 790 cowkeepers and wholesalers and 112 retailers registered. ^{Milk and Dairies.}

Mixed milk samples from 35 herds were submitted to the County Laboratory for test for tubercle bacilli. All the results were negative.

Acting on behalf of the County Council, 95 samples were submitted of Grade " A " (T.T.) and 159 samples of Grade " A " accredited milk ; 50 unsatisfactory results were recorded.

A booklet for the guidance of cowkeepers was issued to all cowkeepers in the District. The booklet set out the principal requirements of the Dairies Acts and Orders and other Byelaws and Regulations affecting the milk industry, with a number of suggestions, plans and illustrations for meeting statutory requirements.

New cowhouses were erected and new drainage and alterations to milk stores carried out at 25 farms.

There were 120 factories (including factories in which mechanical power is used) within the District and registered under the Act. Four milk depots, an iron foundry and two fat refining works are included in this total. A systematic inspection ensured that these premises were kept in a proper sanitary condition. ^{Factories and Workshops.}

The sanitation of the schools in the district remained very much as in previous years. Improvements are gradually being effected, and it is anticipated that during the next few years a satisfactory standard will be achieved, mainly owing to the extended public services. ^{Schools.}

Inspections were made of the 73 licensed premises in the District with the view to obtaining improvements in sanitation and general arrangements. Close co-operation was maintained with the Axbridge and ^{Licensed Premises.}

Weston-super-Mare Licensing Justices. Considerable progress was made. In certain cases premises were entirely rebuilt ; in others, consideration given to rebuilding, whilst in a large percentage of cases premises will be partly rebuilt.

I respectfully thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for the advice and support so readily extended to me at all times. Also I beg to express my gratitude to the Medical Officer of Health, the Clerk and other Officers of the Council for their never-failing co-operation and assistance.

I am, Your obedient servant,

April, 1939.

HENRY R. DAY.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR.

Houses and premises inspected (apart from re-inspections)	768
Total inspections (including re-inspections)	2,291
Complaints investigated	133
Written notices and letters sent	5,257
Nuisances from the keeping of animals abated	2
Nuisances from accumulation of manure abated	1
Complaints from overcrowding dealt with	5
Sewers and drains—re-laid or repaired	139
Numerous verbal notices were given with respect to minor nuisances, but no record of the number has been kept.	
Drainage of new premises inspected and tested	121
Premises provided with public water supply	236
Rooms, classrooms and domestic offices disinfected and disinfectd	90
Milk samples	289

PERIODICALLY INSPECTED.

Registered dairies, cowsheds and milkshops (including wholesale dairies)	790
Private slaughter-houses (7 registered, 13 licensed)	20
Bakehouses	19
Factories and Workshops	120

HENRY R. DAY,

April, 1939.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(i) With State assistance.

(a) By the Local Authority 44

(b) By other bodies or persons Nil

(ii) Otherwise 98

1. Inspection of dwelling-houses during the year :—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) 500

(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 821

(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 306

(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 570

(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 86

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 220

2. Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers 31

3. Action under statutory powers during the year :—

(a).—Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... 1

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—

(a) By owners Nil

(b) By local authority in default of owners Nil

(b).—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	8
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By owners	3
(b) By local authority in default of owners	Nil

(c).—Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	16
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	17

(d).—Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	Nil
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	Nil

4. Housing Act, 1936.—Overcrowding :—

(a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	13
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	13
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	87
(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	16
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	71
(d) Particulars of any cases in which the dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	Nil
(e) Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report	Nil

ORDERS ADOPTED.

PARISH OF AXBRIDGE.—For Urban Powers for Household Refuse Dumping Site. (Order dated 8th August, 1928.)

PARISH OF AXBRIDGE.—(Naming of Streets) Made in respect of Powers under the Public Health Act, 1925—Sections 17-19. (Order dated 18th February, 1936.)

PARISH OF BANWELL.—For Urban Powers to provide for a Dumping Site for disposal of Household Refuse.

PARISH OF BERROW.—For Urban Powers for collection and disposal of Household Refuse. (Order dated 22nd May, 1930.)

PARISH OF BLAGDON.—For Urban Powers to provide for a Dumping Site for disposal of Household Refuse. (20th July, 1936.)

PARISH OF CHEDDAR.—For Urban Powers to provide for a Dumping Site for the disposal of Household Refuse.

PARISH OF CHEDDAR.—Collection of Household Refuse. (31st July, 1936.)

PARISH OF CHEDDAR.—Made in respect of conferring Powers under Town Police Clauses Act, 1847, Sec. 21. (Order dated 5th October, 1929.)

PARISH OF CHEDDAR.—For Urban Powers in respect of naming of streets under Sections 17-19 of the Public Health Act, 1925. (Order dated 8th September, 1938.)

PARISH OF CHURCHILL.—Order for collection and disposal of refuse, special expenses. (Order dated 15th June, 1938.)

PARISH OF CONGRESBURY.—For Urban Powers for collection and disposal of Household Refuse. (Order dated 9th March, 1932.)

PARISH OF HUTTON.—For Urban Powers for collection and disposal of Household Refuse. (2nd July, 1936.)

PARISH OF KEWSTOKE.—Urban Powers both for collection and disposal of Household Refuse. (Order dated 20th February, 1932.)

PARISH OF KEWSTOKE.—Order for collection and disposal of Refuse, Special Expenses. (Order dated 29th March, 1938.)

PARISH OF WEDMORE.—(Street Lighting Area.) For Urban Powers for collection and disposal of Household Refuse. (Order dated 17th February, 1932.)

PARISH OF WINSCOMBE.—Urban Powers to provide Dumping Site for disposal of Household Refuse. (Order dated 17th February, 1932.)

PARISH OF WINSCOMBE.—Order for Urban Powers in respect of Naming of Streets under Sections 17-19 of the Public Health Act, 1925. (Order dated 8th September, 1938.)

BYELAWS ADOPTED.

Byelaws with respect to Sands and Wastes, parishes of Berrow and Brean. Made 28th June, 1929.

Byelaws with respect to Seashore, parish of Kewstoke. Made 12th October, 1934.

Byelaws with respect to Nuisances. Made 21st November, 1934.

Byelaws with respect to Slaughter-houses. Made 26th April, 1935.

Byelaws with respect to Common Lodging Houses. Made 24th April, 1936.

Axbridge Rural District Council Act, 1936, with regard to expenses of providing supplies of water, etc.

Byelaws with regard to Buildings. Made 25th February, 1938.

LAWRENCE BROS.
(W.S.M) LTD.